Rights of Non-Muslim Minorities in a Muslim Country in the Light of Qur'an and Sunnah

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Abstract:
The Issue of the rights of non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries has been one of the most burning issues in this era. It has been highlighted by both Muslim and non-Muslim writers that they are mistreated in Muslim countries. This paper discusses the rights of non-Muslims in a Muslim country in the light of Quran, Sunnah and Islamic history. These rights are the protection of rights and freedom of belief, right to protection of property, honour, assurance of disability, poverty and old age, right of freedom in religion, language and culture, work and profession in government services, equal rights in the society and justice. It will be shown that in Muslim countries, all non-Muslim minorities have their equal rights and same citizen status. This paper ends by providing some suggestions in solving contemporary non-Muslim problems in Muslim countries.

Introduction:

Islam is the everlasting religion for mankind. It is the most favourite and most loved religion (Deen) by God. Hence it is suitable for all places and time. There is no denying the fact that Allah exalts only Deen "Islam". Allah says in the Holy Quran;

"The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to his will)[1].

Afzalur Rahman (1980) wrote in his book, "*Islam Ideology and the Way of Life"* the word 'Islam' (Deen) means submission (to the will of God). It means the total acceptance and implementation of the commandments of God. Islam literally means peace. Therefore the philosophy of Islam implies both obedience to God and peace while implementing His commandments. It is this submission which brings the vital inner peace to individuals and collectively to society which in return guarantees real peace and lasting success."[2]

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Deen-e-Islam is a religion of peace and brotherhood. Our Holy Prophet (PBUH) came to this world for the exaltation and completion of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) presented a complete code of life in the form of the Holy Qur'an for the Guidance of the whole humanity. Allah says in the holy Quran:

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the messenger of Allah (SWT)."[3]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) wrote about this Quranic verse that:

"Our attention having been directed to various Prophets, who were sent with mission to their Several Prophets, and each of whose careers there is some prefigurement of the life of the last and greatest of them, we are now ask to listen to the Proclamation of Muhammad's universal mission. We contemplate no longer, after this, Partial truth. It is not now a Question of Saving Israel from the bondage of Egypt, nor teaching Medina the ethics of business, nor reclaiming the People of Louth from sexual sin or Thamud from the sin of oppression in power or and from arrogance and ancestor-worship. Now are set forth plainly the issues of life and death, the messenger of Allah, the one universal God to all mankind."[4]

Allah (SWT) sent Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a guide and leader for the betterment of humanity, Holy Prophet (PBUH) declared:

"O, people make things easy, do not put people in difficulty, give them happiness and do not cause rift" [5]

Islam accepts all the religions of earlier prophets in Arab, Africa, America, China, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia and etc. All of them are equally respectful as Islam itself. Rather it proclaimed that old divine religions are old versions of Islam. All the teachings of Holy Quran and Sunnah are based on the respect of religions and respect of humanity. Therefore it is forbidden to say anything bad about other religions and their followers. "Islam is a religion that holds respect, dignity and tolerance in very high esteem and the rights and responsibilities inherent in Islam are a declaration of human rights".[6]

Islam extends mercy to all people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was came as mercy. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

"*We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures"*.[7]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) stated it like this:

"So there is no question now of race or nation of a "Chosen People" or the "Seed of Abraham", or the Seed of David, or of Hindu Aryan Varta; or of Jew or Gentile, Arab or Ajam (Persian), Turk or Ta'jik, European or Asiatic, white or coloured, Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian, or African, or American, Australian, or Polynesian, Malaysian, Chinese etc". To all men and creatures other than men who have any spiritual responsibility the principel universally

applyes. All of them are equally as respectful as Islam itself. All the teachings of Islam and Quran are based on the respect of religions and respect of humanity[8]".

Al-Ayed,Salleh wrote, "When a person analyzes Islam with an open mind, the Mercy mentioned in this verse will definitely become apparent. One of the aspects constituting an epitome of this mercy is the way the legislation of Islam deals with people of other faiths. The tolerant attitude of Islam towards non-Muslims, whether they are those residing in their own countries or within the Muslim lands, can be clearly seen through a study of history of Islam".[9]

'Minority' means to be in less number, which is opposite of majority. This word was used as a political term in Europe when democracy was dominant. It was used in comparison with majority. It was considered as an alternative to majority.[10]

The same term will be used keeping in view the current trends i.e. small group which are formed according to their religion, nationality or culture and which are less in number in the country, all are called minorities.[11] Minority is a group of those people who stand together having the same language or same religion or same nationality. These people live with some other group which is more in number and status.[12]

The classification of non-Muslim citizens under the Islamic Jurisprudence:

In Islamic country there are two types of citizens: Muslims and non-Muslims. The Muslim jurists have classified the non-Muslim citizens under different categories.

Maulana Abul'Ala Maududi (1974) wrote,

"That the Islamic Shariah divides non-Muslim citizens into three categories;

(a) Those who become the subject of an Islamic State under some treaty or agreement; (The Dhimmis)

(b) Those who become its subjects of being defeated by Muslims in a war (The Conquered People)

(c) Those who are there in the Islamic state in any other way" [13]

Dr.Muhammad Hamidallah (1973) added two other categories which also come under the Jurisdiction of Muslim state.

(d) Non-Muslims residing temporarily in a Muslim country e.g. tourists etc.

(e) Resident alliance that have opted voluntarily to live in Muslim State.[14]

According to Dr. Mehmood Ahmad Ghazi (2005), in the Islamic Shariah the non-Muslims are divided into five categories;

1- Those who believed on the books revealed by God;

2- Those people on whom it was not confirmed that books were revealed on them or not, like *Zartast and Sabi*.

3- Worshippers of idols;

4- Pagans / Nonbelievers;

5- Atheists.

This division is according to the teaching of Muslim's School of thoughts but in the Islamic Republic, they have been named as Ahl-e-Dimma / Zimmah, Musta'man in context of their relations with the Muslims".[15]

According to Dr. Abdur Rahman (1979), he says that,

"Muslim and non Muslims therefore, are equal before the law in every aspect. In Islam the distinction in the terms "Muslims" and "non-Muslims" merely remains one of political administration and not of human rights. Since the Dhimmis are under Dimmat-Allah, they enjoy complete religions, administrative and political freedom, a right guaranteed to them in return for their "Loyalty and payment of a reasonable tax called '*Jizyah*' which will be utilized in the defence and administration of the state".[16]

In the Islamic Fiqh, the thinkers of Islam have given unlimited kinds of rights. To limit them, there are two important types: 1-Rights of God and 2-Rights of human beings. In the Islamic Republic, the rights of the non-Muslims are clear but the basic rights of minorities are as follow:

Freedom of belief, freedom of the construction of the places of worship, protection of life and wealth, right of habitation, freedom of speech and writing etc. During the period of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), besides these rights, there were unparalleled example of Holy Prophet's treatment with the minorities and religious freedom and kind consideration for them. The teachings of Holy Prophet will come across plenty of examples of protection of the rights of non-Muslims. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) spent all his life living among the non-believers of Makah, hypocrites of Medina, Jews and the Bedouins of deserts. Therefore, it is almost important to observe in the light of historical facts and figures how our Holy Prophet treated the non-Muslim and how he protected their rights during his period. There are examples of the rights which our Holy Prophet gave to them in the books of Seerat-un Nabi. Such examples are not found anywhere in the world.

Relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims in Muslim Countries:

There are many guidelines in the Quran and Sunnah which speak of strengthening and cementing relationship between Muslim and non- Muslim citizens. The basic foundation of this relationship is referred to in the Quran in the following words. Allah says;

"Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allah loved those who are just. Allah only forbids you ,with regard to those who fight you for (your) faith ,And drive you out of your homes and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them(For friendship and protection) it is such as turn to them(in these circumstances),who do wrong."[17]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) explained the above verses,

"Even with unbelievers, unless they are rampant and out to destroy us and our faith, we should deal them kindly and, as is shown by our Holy prophet's own example".[18] This example is in the treaties of Hudaibiyah and Medina. The best example of such treatment can be seen in the life time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Abul Aala Maududi (1985) in his Tafseer, *"Tafhim Al Quran"* wrote that,

"In the early days of Islam Muslims had to migrate from their place of birth because of the persecution at the hands of non- Muslim pagan. Meccans Qutailah bint Abdal-Uzza, the mother of Asma bint Abu-Bakr and wife of Abu-Bakr, who later became the second Caliph, did not migrate from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. nor did she accepted the religion of Islam. After the treaty Hudaibiyh, when Meccans visited Medina, Qutailah came to Medina to see her daughter. Abdullah Bin Zubir, the illustrious son of Asma narrates that Asma first refused to see her non-Muslim mother. When she asked the Prophet (SWA) whether or not she could see her non-Muslim mother, the prophet (saw) asked her to see her and treat her well".[19]

From the above incident, it is concluded,

> "That it is essential for every Muslim to treat with respect with ones parents, brothers, sisters and others relatives no matter what their faith is. They should also try to help them in the hour of need, provided they do not profess to be the open enemies of Islam".[20]

As far as the people of the book, (Jews and Christians) are concerned, they have been given a special position in the Holy Quran since their religion is originally based on the divine books like Torah and Injil. In the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says in respect of Ahal al-kitab:

> *"And dispute ye not with the people of the book, Except with means better (Than mere disputation), unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury); But say" we believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our God and your God is one; and it is to Him We bow (in Islam)."* [21]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) wrote,

"Mere disputations are futile. In order to achieve our purpose as true standard- bearers for Allah, we shall have to find true common ground of belief, as stated in the later part of this verse, and also to show by our urbanity, kindness, sincerity, truth and genuine anxiety, for the good of others, that we are not cranks or merely seeking selfish or questionable aims. Of course those who are deliberately trying to wrong or injure others will have to be treated firmly, as we are guardians of each other. With them, there is little question of finding common ground or exercising patience, until the injury is prevented or stopped. That is the religion of all true and sincere men of faith is, or should be, one; and that is the ideal of Islam."[22]

Islam permits Muslims to take meals with the people of the book, and to eat their slaughtered animals, as well as to marry with their chaste women. The Quran further decrees that married life should be established upon love and compassion. "As such it is truly an act of dispensation on the part of Islam that it allows a Muslim to select, if he so desires to merry and carry forward his lineage to a non- Muslim women."[23]

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

"The food of the people of the book is lawful unto you and yours is law lawful unto them.(Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the people of the book revealed before your time-when you give them their due dowers and desire chastity, not lewdness nor secret intrigues."[24]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) wrote about this Ayah:

"The question is for food generally, such as ordinarily" good and pure": in the matter of meat it should be killed with some sort of solemnity analogous to that of the Takbir. The rules of Islam in this respect being analogous to those of the people of the book, there is no objection to mutual recognition, as oppose to meat killed by pagans with superstitious rites. In this respect the Christian rule is the same. Those abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

Islam promotes a free social intercourse, including inter-marriage if is permitted with the people of the book. A Muslim man may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry Muslim women, i.e., he must give her economic and moral status, and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire. A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man, because her Muslim status would be affected: the wife ordinarily takes the nationality and status of her husband. "A non-Muslim woman marrying a Muslim husband would be expected eventually to accept Islam. Any man or woman, of any race or faith, may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim

woman or man, provided it is from motives of purity and not of lewdness." As always, food cleanliness, social intercourse, marriage and other interests in life, are linked with our duty to Allah and faith in Him. Duty and faith are for our own benefit, here and the hereafter.[25]

The General Rights of Non-Muslims:

The basic rights of non-Muslims in Muslim countries are of two kinds;

1- Their protection from all external threats;

2- Their protection from all internal tyranny of persecution.

"The first kind of protection is the same as in the case of Muslims. The head of a Muslim country and those in authority are bound to look after the interest of all citizens using all the force at their command." [26]

The famous scholar Imam Al-Qurafi (1346-H) quotes the statement of Imam Ibin Hazm (456AH) from his book "*Maratib al-Ijma"*: that,

"If the enemies at war come to our country aiming at certain *Dhimmi*, it is essential for us that we come out to fight them with all our might and weapons since he is under the protection of Allah and His Messenger. If we did anything less than this, it means we have failed in our agreement for protection".[27]

Al-Shaikh Imam Ibn Taimiyyah (661-728AH) says that, "Treat non-Muslims in the same way as Muslims". He further insisted that Muslim citizens are duty bound to spare their hands and tongue from hurting the non-Muslim citizens".[28]

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (780 AH) wrote, "The ruler of the Muslims community is bound to protect non-Muslims and to save them from aggression. Should they fall into captivity, the imam must marshal all the resources to secure their release and punish the transgressors against their lives and properties, even if they were the sole (inhabitants) living in a remote village".[29]

Imam Yusuf Al-Qardawi (1926-2011) writes his famous book "*Ghair Muslimin fil Mujtama' al-Islami",*That "they must not keep any enmity or hatred against the non-Muslims, since Allah does not like tyrants but gives them a quick punishment in this world or gives them greater punishment in the next world."[30]

Regarding the rights and citizenship of non-Muslim minorities, Qaradawi(1926-2011) has said:

"Those people who live under the protection of an Islamic government enjoy special privileges. They are referred to as "the Protected People" (ahl al-dhimma or dhimmis), meaning that Allah, His Messenger ... and the community of Muslims have made a covenant with them that they may live in safety and security under the Islamic government. In modern terminology, dhimmies are

"citizens" of the Islamic state. From the earliest period of Islam to the present day, Muslims are in unanimous agreement that they enjoy the same rights and carry the same responsibilities as Muslims themselves, while being free to practice their own faiths."[31]

In his book titled, "*The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam"*, al-Qaradawi(1926-2011) wrote:

"Islam does not prohibit Muslims to be kind and generous to people of other religions, even if they are idolaters and polytheists, ... it looks upon the people of the Book, that is, Jews and Christians, with special regard, whether they reside in a Muslim society or outside it. The Qur'an never addresses them without saying, "O People of the Book" or "O You who have been given the Book," indicating that they were originally people of a revealed religion. For this reason there exists a relationship of mercy and spiritual kinship between them and the Muslims, all having in common the principles of the one true religion sent by Allah through his prophets ...: He has ordained for (the Muslims) the same religion which He enjoined on Noah, and that which We have revealed to thee (Muhammad) and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: that you should establish the faith and make no division in it."[32]*(Quran42:13)*

There are a number of verses of Holy Quran warning wrong-doers, and the following sayings (Ahadith) of the Prophet (SAW) warning the Muslims against any high handedness towards the non-Muslim citizens.

> *"Whosoever persecuted of Dhimmi or surplus right or took work from him beyond his capacity, or took something from him with evil intentions. I shall be a complainant against him on the Day of Resurrection"*.[33]

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) says,

> *"Whosoever hurts the Dhimmi, I shall be his complainant, and for whosoever I am a complainant, I shall ask for his rights on the Day of Resurrection"*.[34]

The Prophet also said, *"One who hurts a Dhimmi, he hurts me; and one who hurts me, hurts Allah"*.[35]

A Muslims jurist, Ibn-Abdin (d.1836A.H) have argued that, "since Muslims are given the responsibilities to protect the blood and property of non-Muslims and since the persecution of weak persons at the hands of the strong is considered as one of greatest crimes, the persecution on non-Muslims in an Islamic state will be considered to be a greater crime than the persecution of Muslims by non-Muslims." [36] So Islam has clearly explained those orders with reference to the rights of minorities. Instead the word 'right' (Haq) is used as 'lawful rights', 'demands' and related areas in the Islamic Shariah.

Right of Protection:

Therefore it is forbidden to say that other religions and followers of these religions are bad. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

> "*Revile not yet those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance*".[37]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951), has explained about this verse of the Quran and wrote,

"A man's actual personal religion depends upon many things: his personal psychology, the background of his life, his hidden or repressed feelings, tendencies, or history (which psychoanalysis tries to unravel), his hereditary dispositions or antipathies, and all the subtle influences of his education and his environment. The task before the man of God i.e a Muslim is:

1- to use any of these which can subservice the higher ends;

2- to purify such as have been misused;

3- to introduce new ideas and moods of looking of things and;

4- to correct what is wrong and cannot be mended.

All for the purpose of leading to the truth and gradually letting in spiritual light where there was darkness before. If that is not done with discretion and the will of spiritual teacher, there may be not only as reaction, an obstinate stance but an unseemly show of dishonour to the true God and his truth, and doubts would spread among the weaker brethren whose faith is shallow and infirm. What happens to individuals holds true to nations or groups of people collectively. They think in their self-obsession that their own ideas are right. Allah in His Infinite compassion hears with them and asks those who have purer ideas of faith not to vilify the weaknesses of their neighbors. Lest the neighbors in their turn verify, the real truth and make matters even worse than before. Insofar as there is active evil, he will deal with it in his own way. Definitely, the righteous man must not hide his light under a bushel, or compromise with evil, or refuse to establish right of living, where he has the power to do so".[38]

It means Islam forbids us to taunt the followers of other religion. Islam has presented a Universal Principle for the entire humanity. That people of other religions are free to practice their own faith, no one will force him to accept his ideas or religion.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

"*Let there be no compulsion in religion*"[39]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) explains that,

"The compulsion is incompatible with religion because: (1) Religion depends upon faith and will and these would be meaningless if indeed by force; (2) Truth and error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of good will as to the fundamentals of his faith; (3) Allah's Protection is continuous and His plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light".[40]

Though, Allah (SWT) has chosen Islam as the best religion for humanity, without any forced conviction, but according to the doctrine of tolerance in Islam everyone is free to opt and practice any religion he/she likes. Islam does not force anything on non believers as conviction cannot be forced. Further, He asks Muhammad (PBUH) to tell the non believer of Makkah, who did not accept him in spite of his best effects.

Allah (SWT) says in Holy Quran:

"To you be your way, and to me mine"[41]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951), explains the above verse as follow:

"I having been given the truth cannot come to your false ways; you, having your vested interests will not give them up. For your ways the responsibility is yours: I have shown you the truth. For my ways the responsibility is mine; you have no right to ask me to abandon the truth. You Persecutions will be in vain, the truth must Prevail in the end. Hold fast to truth" in scorn of consequence." [42] So it is clear that Islam gives personal freedom to all the human beings to live the life as they want in their life as a human being.

A renowned western orientalist, Sir Thomas Arnold (1992), stated in his book, *"The Preaching of Islam"* that, "We never attempt of a report of any planned or any organized persecution compel non-Muslim minorities to accept Islam, or any organized persecution aimed at uprooting the Christian religion. If any of the Caliphs had chosen any of those policies, they would have over whelmed Christianity with the same ease with which Ferdinand and Isabella exiled Islam from Spain or with which Louis XIV made following Protestantism a punishable crime in France, or with which the Jews were exiled from England for 350 years. At that time Eastern Churches were completely isolated from the rest of the Christian world. They had no supporters in the world as they were considered heretical sects of Christianity. Their very existence to this day is the strongest evidence of the Policy of Islamic government's tolerances towards them."[43]

Equal Rights in Society and justice

In the Holy Quran and Sunnah it is not stated clearly that a Muslim country (Islamic State) will never differentiate between a Muslim and non-Muslim. As a human being under the Islamic Shariah, every non-Muslim enjoys security and equal justice under the Islamic Shariah. If a Muslim violates the dictates of Shariah, he will be punished; likewise a non-Muslim who violates the

term of his part of agreement will also be punished. The protection of the rights and security of the non-Muslims are granted by the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran;

> *"O you, who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred, for others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fair Allah. For Allah is well acquainted with all that you do".*[44]

In the explanation of the ayah, Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) wrote;

"To do justice and act righteously in a favorable or natural atmosphere is meritorious enough, but the real test comes when you have to do justice to people who have you or to whom you have an aversion. But no less is required of you the higher moral law."[45]

About human brotherhood Allah says in the Holy Quran;

> *"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your lord who created you from a single soul and from it created is met and from them twain has spread countless man and women, be careful of your duties towards Allah in whom you claim (your rights) or one another and the wombs that bore you: for Allah ever watches over you."*[46]

Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951) explains about this Ayah that,

"All our mutual rights and duties are referred to Allah .We are his creatures: His will is the standard and measured of good; and our duties are measured by our conformity with his will. "Our wills are ours, to make them Thine," says Tennyson (In Memoriam). Among ourselves (human beings) our mutual rights and duties arise out of Allah's laws, the sense of right that is implanted in us by him".[47]

Right of protection of Life and Property:

In the teaching of Islam there is no distinction of a human beings status due to race, religion, citizenship, economic status or personal capabilities which can even obliterate the human rights of a non-Muslim. If any Muslim tries to do so, that Islamic law will prescribe redress and the Muslim, if found guilty, will be punished. Islamic teachings are very clear, Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran;

> *"Take not life which Allah is made sacred except, by way of justice and Law."* For the comprehensive word haqq, I have used the two words, "Justice and Law:" other significations implied are: right, truth, what is becoming etc. It is not only that human life is sacred, but all life is sacred. Even in killing animals for

food, a dedicatory formula "In the name of Allah" has to be employed, to make it lawful.[48]

And at other place in the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says;

> *"That if anyone slew a person, unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land, it would be as if, he slew the whole people; and if anyone of saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people"*.[49]

The above verses clearly show that lives of both Muslim and non-Muslim are equally precious and his blood is as that of a Muslim. Once, in the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH), a Muslim killed a Dhimmi (non-Muslim). The Prophet (PBUH) immediately ordered for the execution of the Muslim and said, "I am responsible for obtaining redress for the weak persons".[50]

In the days of caliph Umar, "A person of the tribe of "Baker bin Wail" killed Dhimmi of Hijrah (Hajjar). The caliph ordered that the murderer be handed over to the kith and kin of the deceased. This was done and successors of deceased executed him."[51]

"During the Period of Othman and the days of 'Ali' (RAA) the law was the same for the non-Muslim. That is why the Muslim Jurists have inferred that if a Muslim, even unintentionally, kills a Dhimmi (non-Muslim) similar compensation must be paid as is fixed in the case of the unintentional murder of a Muslim".[52]

Right of Protection of Personal life and his Property:

The right of a non-Muslim to his person and property is also mentioned in the following Hadith contained in "*AlSahih al-Bukhari":*

> *"Abdullah bin Amr reported; Allah's Messenger (SAW) as saying 'if any one kills a covenanted man (any one treaty of Peace has been made, or a member of protected communities). He will not experience the fragrance of Paradise and the fragrance of paradise can feel from the forty years journey"*.[53]

The life and property of non-Muslims citizens and tourists is protected by the Muslim State. In the same way as those of Muslim citizens. These details are contained in various utterances of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).[54]

Right of Protection of Religious Building and Properties

The Muslims did not destroy / damage the churches rather they protected them. As a result the Archbishops of Rifardashir and 'leader of all bishops of Persia, the Nestorian Patriarch Geoff III wrote; "The Arches, to whom God has given power over the whole world, know how wealthy you are, for they live among you. In spite of this, they do not assail the Christian creed. To the country

they have sympathy with our religion, and venerate our Priests and Saints of our Lord, and they graciously donate our churches and monasteries." [55]

Rights to Honor of non-Muslims

The non-Muslims must always be respected as they are human being. He must not be abused. As Dhimmi, their protection in every respect is the duty of every Muslim as it is a responsibility imposed by the religion of Islam and it amounts to fulfillment of one pledge to Allah (SWT) and his Messenger Muhammad (PBUH) "*Dhimmat Allah wa Rasulihi"*.[56]

Imam Al-Qarafi (1346-H) wrote, in his famous book *"Al-Furuq*";

"If anyone persecuted a non-Muslim even by insulting words, he has in reality broken his pledge to Allah and His Messenger and also his pledge to the religion of Islam." [57] In Islam, the life of every person is his own life. He has a full right to enjoy his life in his privacy. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran;

> *"If it is no virtue if ye enter your houses from the back, it is a virtue, if ye fear Allah. Enter houses through the proper doors."*[58]

A Muslim has no any right to enter into his Muslim or non-Muslim neighbor's house without first seeking his permission. In Surah An-Nur, Allah (SWT) says, in the Holy Quran;

> *"If you find no one in the house, enter not until permission is given to you: if you are asked to go back, go back: that makes for greater purity for yourselves: and Allah knows well all that you do."*[59]

In this ayah, this right has been explained very clearly by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1951),

"That is if no one replies: there may be people in the house not in a presentable state .Or even if the house is empty; you have no right to enter it until you obtain the owner's permission, wherever he may be. The fact of your not receiving a reply does not entitle you to enter without permission. You should wait, or knock twice or three times, and withdraw in case no permission is received. If you are actually asked to withdraw, as the inmates are not in a condition to receive you, you should withdraw, either for time, or altogether, as the inmates may wish you to do. Even if they are your friends, you have no right to take them by surprise or enter against their wishes. Your own purity of life and conduct as well as of motives is thus tested." [60]

A non-Muslim western Scholar, Sir Thomas Arnold (1992) in his famous book *"The preaching of Islam"* wrote that,

"Islam also permitted non-Muslim to observe their civil law in matters such as marriage and divorce. Regarding criminal justice, Muslim Jurists would pass sentences of non-Muslim in issues considered sinful in their religion but exempted them from issues they had to be permissible such as drinking wine and eating pork." [61]

The non-Muslims have the right that their honor be protected. This right is extended not only to non-Muslim resident but also to visitors. They all have the right to be secured and protected. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran;

> *"And if any one of the polytheists seeks their protection, then grant him protection, so that he may hear the word of Allah; (the Quran) and then deliver him to place of safety. That is because their people who do not know."*[62]

In the Quran Allah (SWT) instructs Muslim to treat non-Muslim courteously in a spirit of kindness and generosity, provided they are not hostile towards Muslims.

Right of Freedom of Expression of Religion:

The non-Muslim minorities of any Muslim country are entitled to enjoy the same right and privileges as Muslims in expressing their views and opinion in any public affair. In the matters of religion they will have full freedom to run their mission organizations and evangelist activities. They will be free to propagate their religious thoughts to their peoples, but not to the muslims. Every non-Muslim has a right to change their religion from one religion to another religion. If they have any problem, or they feel any difficulty, they will submit their objections or suggestions. The Muslim country will have to consider them justly and sympathetically.[63]

Social Security Provided by Islam to the Non-Muslim:

Islamic teaching requires the state to provide its citizens with disabilities- Muslim or non-Muslim- that prevented them from employment. They are provided for by the public treasury and the ruler is negligent if he does not do so. Many instances of muslims providing social security to the non-muslim citizens are recorded in history. Umar Ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph of Muslims, once passed by an old blind man, who was begging in front of a house. Umar asked him which religious community he belonged to. The man said he was Jew. Umar then asked him, "What brought you to this?" The old man said, "Do not ask me; ask …poverty, and old age". Umar took the man to his own home, helped him from his personal money, and then ordered the head of the treasury, "You must look after this man and others like him. We have not treated him fairly. He should not have spent the best years of his life among us to find misery in his old age". Umar also relieved him and others in his situation of paying the *jizya*. [64]

Umar bin Abdul-Aziz(c 682-720), another Muslim caliph, wrote to his agent in Basra, Iraq, "Search for the people of the covenant in your area who may have grown old, and are unable to earn, and provide them with regular stipends from the treasury to take care of their needs".[65]

In the history of Islam, the rights of non-Muslims, especially during the period of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Khulafa ar-Rasyidin, the period of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas, the non-muslims were given all those right which are called rights of citizens today. The arrangements were made to protect their lives, wealth and religious place of worship. There was no enmity and prejudice for the non-Muslim nations, rather Muslims or non-Muslims were treated equally. There was no question of minorities and majorities. There was no hatred on the basic of rank and cruelty on the basis of religion.[66]

As an example the Medina Charter can be cited. "It is a historical document which reflects the Holy Prophet's political insight and deep thinking. The Holy Prophet's sayings and agreements were never based on religion. Following are some points of agreement which were made with the people of Najran, Yemen, Majoos, Hunain, Khaiber and Aila etc.

1. You are given protection from his God and His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
2. Your lives, religion, wealth, servants and states will be protected by Allah.
3. You will not be forced to pay Jiziya or participate in warlike adventure.
4. You will be provided help, hospitality to your guests and respect to the gentlemen on your request. Nobody will be over burdened.
5. The funerals will not be obstructed.
6. If someone treats badly, he will be avenged." [67]

A great Muslim historian Jareer Tibri(1324.AH), wrote in his renowned book "*Tareekh-ul-Umam-wal-malook*" that, "There is no danger to life, wealth, religion and Sharah for the non-Muslim. There is no compulsion in way of dressing, hair cutting, and horse riding. You will be forgiven for immoral actions in special circumstances." [68]

Imam Bukhari(194-265H) wrote in "Al*Sahih Bukhari"*, the last sentences are worth reading;

"I will advice in favors of those people, who are under the supervision of God and His Prophet that, their promise should be kept. They should be favored in case of fighting and should not be troubled more forbearance."[69]

In the end its seems, that in the light of Quran ,Sunnah, Islamic teachings and the history of Islam, non-Muslims has been given the rights. It not only

raised the moral of minorities but ideal traditions are set according to the concept of globalization. If Muslims act upon the practiced Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), there will be peace and happiness for all human beings. Hence it can be concluded that non-Muslims are being treated as human beings and they should be given their due rights described in the Holy Quran and Sunnah, or those rights which were given to them during the period of Muhammad (PBUH) and the four caliphs and in the history of Islam.

Conclusion:

The discussion in this paper has presented the rights of non-Muslim in the light of Quran, Sunnah and history of Islam. This study concludes that an Islamic teaching of tolerance, towards non-Muslim is an established fact. This aspect of tolerance of persons is unique to Islam and perhaps has not been obtained by any other religion of the world. Our discussion has clarified how non-Muslim living in Muslim countries enjoys rights that they might not be granted in non-Muslim countries. Some readers may respond with the objection that these rights might have existed in history, but the experience of non-Muslims living in Muslim countries today is different. The author's observation is that non-Muslims still enjoy many of the similar rights today, perhaps even more. They are protected by the laws of the countries as well as by the public. The driving force of tolerance by the public is by virtue of force of Allah (SWT) and love of Muhammad (PBUH). The following verse of Quran is another command of Allah (SWT) in this respect:

> *"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do."* [70]*(Al-Quran 5:8)*

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